

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN JO 01335 172219 Z

72

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SCEM-02 INT-08 FPC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00

EB-11 COME-00 IGA-02 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-12 RSR-01 /130 W
----- 094308

R 172140 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3776

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 1335

E. O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ENRG, BPRO, ETRD, CS

SUBJ: ELECTRICITY CRISIS

REFS: A. STATE 069865; (B) SAN JOSE 1254

SUMMARY: THIS CABLE SUMMARIZES ELECTRIC POWER SITUATION.
ELECTRICITY CRISIS SOMEWHAT EASED WITH SUCCESS-
FUL INSTALLATION OF FIRST AEG TURBINE. TOOMBLEY OFFICIALS
BELIEVE SECOND TURBINE WILL BE IN FULL POWER BY END OF PRESENT
WEEK. IT IS TOO EARLY TO ATTEMPT TO QUANTIFY OVERALL ECONOMIC
LOSSES OF CRISIS. END SUMMARY.

1. POWER IS STILL BEING RATIONED FOR MOST AREAS
(UP TO 12 HOUR BLACKOUT); HOWEVER, RATIONING WAS CONSIDERABLY
LESS STRINGENT OVER PAST WEEKEND AND APRIL PRESS REPORTS
IT WILL BE LIFTED FOR HOLY THURSDAY AND GOOD FRIDAY, WHEN
INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL LIFE OF COSTA RICA NORMALLY
ALMOST AT STANDSTILL. POWER DEMAND ALSO HAS BEEN
LESSENNED BY CLOSING OF SCHOOLS SINCE APRIL 11 AND OF SOME
GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND BUSINESSES FOR ENTIRE HOLY WEEK.

2. CONCERNING DIESEL FUEL SUPPLY SITUATION, HEAVY
USE BY ICE OF THERMAL GENERATING UNITS PLUS DEMAND
FROM PRIVATE SECTOR FOR SMALL, AUXILIARY UNITS HAS
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PAGE 02 SAN JO 01335 172219 Z

RESULTED IN TIGHT, BUT SO FAR MANAGEABLE SITUATION, WITH DISTRIBUTORS RATIONING SUPPLIES TO REGULAR CUSTOMERS IN ORDER TO MEET THIS NEW DEMAND. (WITH INSTALLATION OF SECOND TURBINE, ICE DIESEL NEEDS WILL BE UP TO 40 PERCENT.) PROSPECT OF EARLY ARRIVAL OF 35,000 BARRELS SHIPMENT SHOULD HELP MEET DEMANDS FOR TIME BEING. HOWEVER, DIESEL SUPPLY WILL BE CONTINUING PROBLEM AND ELECTRIC ENERGY SITUATION WILL BE EXACERBATED UNLESS CONTINUING HIGH LEVEL DIESEL IMPORTS ASSURED.

3. NO REAL QUATIFICATION OF LOSSES DUE TO CRISIS YET POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, MOST BUSINESSES SEEM TO HAVE ACCOMMODATED QUITE WELL. THIS HAS BEEN POSSIBLE BY ADJUSTING VACATION SCHEDULES, USE OF AUXILIARY GENERATING UNITS, CHANGING WORK SHIFTS AND PULLING DOWN INVESNTORIES WHILE CUTTING BACK ON PRODUCTION. NEVERTHELESS, DROUGHT AND RESULTING ELECTRICITY CRISIS WILL BE REFLECTED, HOWEVER MODERATELY, IN ECONOMIC GROWTHH PERFORMANCE. IMPORT BILL FOR GENERATORS, GRAINS WILL GO UP. DROUGHT IS HAVING ADVERSE AFFECT ON CATTLE INDUSTRY, SUGAR YIELDS, GRAIN PRODUCTION, AND THE POWER SHORTAGE HAS HURT SOME OF THE SMALLER COFFE PROCESSING PLANTS.

4. CABLE REPLYING TO QUESTIONS POSED IN STATE 069865 AND OTHER ASPECTS OF GENERATING CAPACITY NEEDS FOLLOWS.
VAKY

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